

THE DIRECTOR OF  
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NOTE FOR THE DIRECTOR

FROM: Herbert E. Meyer  
Vice Chairman, NIC

This from David Hart.



Herbert E. Meyer

Attachment:

"Signatures are not security"  
by David Hart, The Times,  
June 3, 1985

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David Hart questions the value of a treaty Moscow ignores

# Signatures are not security

The Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, and his West German counterpart, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, are more reluctant to back President Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative than Mrs Thatcher and Chancellor Kohl. But a recent Gallup poll shows that, in Britain, Mrs Thatcher has a better idea of the voters' wishes than Sir Geoffrey: 48 per cent thought Britain should join, in research, 39 per cent thought not. Although SDI opponents in the foreign offices of the West claim that their opposition is based on many factors - scepticism about technical feasibility, fear of the cost and of being led by the nose by technology - it is largely based on their profound respect for the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty - which was signed in Moscow in 1972 by Nixon and Brezhnev as part of the Salt I agreements.

The American approach to arms control at that time was informed by two principles. First, that the two superpowers could be taken as two broadly similar entities. Secondly, that these two entities would be less likely to attack each other and more likely to reduce their arsenals of nuclear weapons if each kept itself widely vulnerable. But because the US and the Soviet Union are, in fact, controlled and directed by entirely different systems, by people with very different views, under different pressures, their understanding of the purpose and effect of treaties differs widely, as does their readiness to adhere to them.

Fortunately this seems to be well understood by the British electorate. In the same Gallup poll, 59 per cent said they thought the Russians could not generally be trusted to keep to their agreements on nuclear arms as against 25 per cent who thought they could.

The US position at the beginning of the Salt negotiations was that vulnerability could be accepted provided there was some limitation of offensive weapons immediately and further substantial limitation followed within a reasonable time. The Russians were extremely reluctant to accept this principle and tried for more than two years to get agreement on limitation of ABM weapons without any limitation on offensive weapons. It was not until 1971 that they accepted the principle of some limitation on offensive weapons.



1972: Nixon and Brezhnev put their names to what is now a mere scrap of paper.

In a unilateral declaration in the Salt Protocol, the American chief negotiator stated, inter alia:

Both sides recognize that these initial agreements would be steps toward the achievement of more complete limits on strategic arms. If an agreement providing for more strategic offensive arms limitations were not achieved within five years, US supreme interests could be jeopardized. Should that occur, it would constitute a basis for withdrawal from the ABM treaty.

Strategic nuclear arms have not been limited. Quite the reverse. In 1972 the Soviet Union had 1,500 intercontinental ballistic missiles, 500 submarine-launched ballistic missiles and 150 bombers capable of delivering a total of 2,000 nuclear warheads. Today it has 1,398 ICBMs, 982 SLBMs and 423 bombers capable of delivering 8,800 nuclear warheads. The Americans have increased their arsenal as well, but by significantly less, both in quantity and quality. Apart from the unsatisfactory increase in offensive weapons, the Russians have decreased their vulnerability by building a proscribed radar installation at Krasnoyarsk.

There are elements in the Foreign Office who believe that the construction of this massive, phased-array radar may not constitute a violation.

For most western officials, including officials at the MoD, there is absolutely no doubt that it demonstrates a blatant disregard for ABM treaty provisions. The only question is whether it was knowingly authorized by political leaders in Moscow or simply constructed on military authority.

Within the last 18 months the Soviet Union has also successfully tested its SAX 12 missiles in an ABM role. If this ABM capability is taken together with Krasnoyarsk, which can be plugged into the national Soviet air defence system at will, the Russians have the building blocks for a national ABM defence that can rapidly be put together: not just a minor infringement but a violation of the fundamental principles of the treaty. Despite this, President Reagan, referring to SDI weapons, said at Strasbourg on May 8: "When the time for decisions on the possible production and deployment of such systems comes, we must and will discuss and negotiate these issues with the Soviet Union."

The Americans seem to be ready to honour a treaty the Soviet Union has clearly violated. In such honouring they will be giving Moscow an effective veto over American deployment of any defensive weapons that SDI research may evolve.

President Reagan also said at Strasbourg that "aggression feeds on appeasement and weakness itself can be provocative". By continuing to adhere to the ABM treaty he is indulging in a form of weakness that may increasingly be provocative to a Soviet Union where, with a contracting economy and the Marxist millennium receding ever further from view, the military have a ferocious and increasing grip on political power.

Security is the first consideration of sovereign states. Treaties can increase security, and they can decrease it by lulling one party into weakness and self-deception. The ABM treaty is beginning to jeopardize western security. President Reagan should give reasonable notice to Moscow that the US will withdraw from the ABM treaty unless Krasnoyarsk is dismantled and the SAX 12 verifiably destroyed.

Since, by conforming with either of these demands, the Soviet Union will be tacitly admitting that it is in fundamental breach, it is unlikely to co-operate. If it remains unwilling to adhere to its terms the treaty is without positive value. Indeed it undermines western security. Under these circumstances President Reagan should withdraw from the treaty.

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